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9/11 10th Anniversary Article

9/17/11

Ten years ago, on September 11, 2001, two planes crashed into the World Trade Center, and the whole world stopped and watched the events unfold.

The tragedy, which cost almost 3,000 people their lives, rocked America to its core, and became a day that no one could forget.

Most people have memories of watching the horrific spectacle that commandeered that day and weeks following it, and it is a sensitive subject to the nation a decade later.

Now, 10 years later, the nation pauses, remembers and reflects upon what had happened on those days. And none remember more clearly than the survivors of the tragedy, and those who lost family in the attack.

Here is the story of one of those survivors.

Deborah Tourloukis was in one of the towers when the first plane hit. She was in New York on a business trip, and had the misfortune to be in the North Tower for the attack. “At first, we thought it was an earthquake… the whole building was shaking from right to left,”, said Deborah in an interview. “We could see the debris falling down from the building.”

The security force of the World Trade Center asked her and her co-workers to remain where they were, on the 47th floor until they discovered whether it was an accident or an attack. Then the second plane hit, and the answer made itself obvious.

They were evacuated to the bottom of the building, but were unable to exit through the lobby, because of the dangers of falling rubble. They were instead routed down into the plaza beneath the Trade Center, to escape that way.

At that point, the structural integrity of the South Tower had been compromised, and the South Tower began to come down on top of her and the other groups.

The bricks and mortar began to come down from the ceiling as the South Tower collapsed. Fortunately, a sheet of plate glass from a nearby shop sheltered Deborah and her partner. The group had been told to buddy up for the evacuation process, and Deborah’s buddy was a co-worker she had never met.

This co-worker saved her life, convincing her to get out of the plaza while there was still time to escape, and they exited the plaza shortly before the North Tower began coming down as well.

Deborah Tourloukis was fortunate enough to escape with her life, but the trauma of recovering from such a tragedy is not easy. “I was fortunate enough that the company paid for therapy sessions… but it was a very traumatic thing to recover from.”

So it was for every survivor who was caught in the attack. Recovery is a long, arduous process.

Many died in the attacks, and many died aiding the survivors, including the brave firefighters and rescue workers who tirelessly worked at saving lives over the weeks following.

On the 10th Anniversary of 9/11, a touching monument to all those lost lives was finally unveiled. In the space where the World Trade Center stood is now a memorial to the 2,983 men and women who lost their lives.

On the 11th of September, the memorial was opened to special guests, and on the next day, opened to the public fully.

Many have already flocked to it to pay their tributes to the victims of the attack and the brave men who fell in an attempt to save lives, and many more shall come throughout the next months.

The memorial is a reminder not to forget the events of 9/11… it is a tribute to the American spirit, and it is a flame that will always burn.